

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 287 - APRIL 4, 1977

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. EGYPT. PRESIDENT SADAT ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON
YESTERDAY--THE FIRST ARAB HEAD OF STATE TO VISIT THE US
SINCE THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE. IN A PRESS
CONFERENCE AT THE CONCLUSION OF HIS VISIT TO WEST
GERMANY AND FRANCE, SADAT STATED THAT THE US ATTITUDE
TOWARD THE MIDDLE EAST CONTAINED ENCOURAGING SIGNS
INCLUDING:

--PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT THE PALESTINIANS
NEEDED A HOMELAND;

--THE SUSPENSION OF THE SALE OF CONCUSSION BOMBS TO
ISRAEL;

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--THE PRIORITY GIVEN TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM AS
ILLUSTRATED BY SECRETARY VANCE'S FACT-FINDING TRIP TO
THE AREA;

--THE US INVITATION TO ARAB LEADERS TO COME TO WASHINGTON.

2. SADAT AGAIN REFERRED TO 1977 AS THE "YEAR OF PEACE"
AND SAID THAT REPORTED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US AND
THE USSR ARE NO REASON TO POSTPONE A MIDDLE EAST
SOLUTION. SADAT MAY HAVE CREATED A SUBSTANTIAL

DOMESTIC PROBLEM FOR HIMSELF IF THE VISIT DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS, EITHER IN ARMS ACQUISITION OR IN MEANINGFUL PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE.

3. SADAT ALSO DECLARED THAT HE SAW NO CHANGE IN THE FRENCH ATTITUDE AS A RESULT OF GUIRINGAUD'S RECENT VISIT TO ISRAEL. THE EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT NOTED THAT AT THIS STAGE, HE WANTED FRANCE AND WESTERN EUROPE "TO PRESENT THE FACTS TO ISRAEL." WITH REGARD TO EUROPE'S ROLE IN SOLVING THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, SADAT SAID IT SHOULD FACILITATE THE HOLDING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE BY MAKING THE ISRAELIS REALIZE THAT IT IS USELESS TO PLACE OBSTACLES IN THE WAY OF THE CONFERENCE. FRANCE PARTICULARLY, HE SAID, WHETHER SEPARATELY OR PARTICIPATING WITH THE STATES OF WEST EUROPE, MUST HAVE A SHARE IN PEACE GUARANTEES.

4. IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, SADAT REPEATED HIS OPPOSITION TO A UNITED ARAB DELEGATION TO GENEVA. HE EMPHASIZED THAT A GENEVA CONFERENCE MUST BE CAREFULLY PREPARED AND STRUCTURED SO THAT NO CONCERNED PARTY, INCLUDING THE SOVIETS, LOSE FACE. SADAT OBSERVED THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE CONVENED ONLY TO RATIFY WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED ON BEFOREHAND. IF ALL DETAILS WERE TO BE SETTLED AT GENEVA, THE CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE TO LAST TEN YEARS. ON CONCESSIONS, HE INSISTED THAT THE
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ARABS WOULD MAKE NO TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS, BUT CITED THE PRECEDENT OF UNHINDERED PASSAGE THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL FOR ISRAELI SHIPS AS THE TYPE OF CONCESSION HE IS PREPARED TO MAKE.

5. ON GUARANTEES, SADAT REPORTEDLY TOLD SCHMIDT THAT HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO A DEFENSE PACT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE US-AS LONG AS IT IS OFFSET BY A PARALLEL PACT BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE US. THIS APPEARS TO DIFFER FROM HIS EARLIER POSITION WHICH DID NOT OBJECT TO A US-ISRAELI DEFENSE PACT AS LONG AS EGYPT RECEIVED SIMILAR INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES. IF THIS REPORT IS CORRECT, THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME SADAT HAS REFERRED TO PARALLEL EGYPT-US AND ISRAEL-US DEFENSE PACTS.

6. OUR CAIRO EMBASSY WAS RECENTLY IN CONTACT WITH MUSTAPHA MURAD, THE SELF-PROCLAIMED LEADER OF THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION. MURAD'S COMMENTS, ACCORDING TO THE EMBASSY, WERE AN INDICATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH EXPECTATIONS FOR A SUCCESSFUL SADAT VISIT TO WASHINGTON CUT ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. THESE EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN FUELED BY SADAT'S OWN PUBLIC OPTIMISM.

7. EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTS THAT THE EGYPTIAN PRESS CONTINUES TO LAMBAST LIBYA. JOURNALISTIC ATTACKS HAVE DWELLED ON LIBYA'S BORDER CLOSURES AND THE ARREST BY EGYPTIAN SECURITY FORCES OF FOUR GROUPS OF LIBYAN-TRAINED SABOTEURS. "AL AKHBAR" HAS ALSO CRITICIZED AN UNNAMED ARAB LEADER (QADHAFI) WHO "MADLY SQUANDERS HIS PEOPLE'S MONEY IN HYSTERICAL BATTLES AGAINST OTHER ARABS." POSSIBLY RELATED TO THE HEIGHTENED TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, THE EGYPTIANS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEGUN TO MOVE AN ARMORED BRIGADE TO THE LIBYAN BORDER OSTENSIBLY TO TIGHTEN SECURITY THERE (SECRET)

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8. LEBANON. THE RIGHTIST FORCES CONSOLIDATED THEIR POSITION ALONG THE ISRAELI BORDER OVER THE WEEKEND. SOME SHARP CLASHES OCCURRED IN THE BINT JBAYL AREA. BECAUSE OF THEIR SUCCESSES LAST WEEK, THE RIGHTISTS ARE ABLE TO SHELL BINT JBAYL FROM THE NORTHEAST AS WELL AS THE SOUTHWEST. IN THE PAST, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THEIR DESIRE TO MINIMIZE CASUALTIES, THE RIGHTISTS HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO CAPTURE THE TOWN. IN RECENT WEEKS, THE PALESTINIAN/LEFTISTS HAVE CONCENTRATED THEIR FORCES SEVERAL MILES NORTH OF BINT JBAYL FOR THE TOWN WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO HOLD AGAINST A CONCERTED ATTACK.

9. IN ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT, OUR TEL AVIV DEFENSE ATTACHE REPORTED THAT HE HAD SPOKEN IN METULLA, ISRAEL, WITH THE COMMANDER OF THE RIGHTIST FORCES IN SOUTH LEBANON, MAJOR HADDAD, AND THAT HE HAD OBSERVED SHIITE SMALL UNIT COMMANDERS AND CHRISTIANS IN METULLA PLANNING TACTICAL OBJECTIVES WITH HADDAD. (CONFIDENTIAL/NOFORN)

10. ISRAEL. EMBASSY TEL AVIV REPORTED THAT MENACHEM BEGIN'S RECENT HOSPIALIZATION MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO A MILD HEART ATTACK. ACCORDING TO A LIKUD CONTACT, BEGIN'S CONDITION HAD "SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS HEART" AND IT IS POSSIBLE HE MAY HAVE TO POSTPONE ACTIVE ELECTION CAMPAIGNING FOR A MONTH. CHARGE DUNNIGAN COMMENTED THAT BEGIN'S ABSENCE FROM THE HUSTINGS COULD

DAMAGE THE OPPOSITION LIKUD'S CHANCES IN THE ELECTIONS, SINCE THEY HAVE NO OTHER LEADER OF HIS PROMINENCE.

11. THE VISIT OF FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRINGAUD APPEARS TO HAVE IMPROVED FRANCO-ISRAELI RELATIONS. ALLON STATED THAT THEIR TALKS HAD "TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF," AND GUIRINGAUD REFERRED TO THE FRENCH DESIRE TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL. GUIRINGAUD ALSO REITERATED THAT FRANCE DID NOT WISH TO BE A MEDIATOR IN THE

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MIDEAST, BUT WAS PREPARED TO JOIN IN INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES AS PART OF A PEACE SETTLEMENT. EMBASSY TEL AVIV NOTED THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD ALSO DECIDED TO SET UP A JOINT COMMITTEE FOR COMMERCE AND TRADE.

12. THE ISRAELI PRESS HAS CARRIED THE STORY THAT ISRAEL'S ASHKENAZI CHIEF RABBI, GOREN, HAS BEEN INVITED TO VISIT MOSCOW BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE MOSCOW JEWISH COMMUNITY. SOVIET PERMISSION FOR HIS VISIT WILL BE REQUESTED, GOREN'S ASSISTANT SAID.

13. OUR CONSULATE GENERAL IN JERUSALEM HAS LEARNED FROM A RELIABLE CONTACT THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE REPORTEDLY NOW CONSTRUCTING THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR A NEW CITY IN THE JORDAN VALLEY NORTH OF JERICHO. THE SETTLEMENT WOULD HOUSE UP TO 5,000 SETTLERS. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, THE UN CONFERENCE ON RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, MEETING IN VIENNA, ADOPTED A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING ITS "GRAVE CONCERN" OVER ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS. THE RESOLUTION CALLS UPON THE UN TO TAKE STEPS TO RESTORE THE GOLAN TO SYRIAN CONTROL.

14. OUR TEL AVIV DEFENSE ATTACHE REPORTED THAT 100 SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY PERSONNEL ARE NOW LIVING IN HAIFA, WHERE THEY ARE BEING TRAINED ON THE "RESHEF" PATROL BOATS. ISRAEL HAS CONTRACTED TO SELL A NUMBER OF THESE VESSELS TO SOUTH AFRICA. (CONFIDENTIAL)

15. PALESTINIANS. PLO SPOKESMAN ABU MAYZAR ANNOUNCED THAT THE NEW PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING IN DAMASCUS THIS WEEK. THE AGENDA CALLS FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE TO ELECT A NEW PALESTINE CENTRAL COUNCIL AND "DRAW UP WORKING PLANS FOR FUTURE PALESTINIAN ISSUES" ACCORDING TO ABU MAYZAR.

16. A PLO DELEGATION IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT AMMAN THIS
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WEEK, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY DAMASCUS. A SAUDI NEWSPAPER SAID THAT ARAFAT WILL DECIDE WHETHER TO VISIT JORDAN WHEN THE RESULTS OF THE DELEGATION'S TRIP ARE KNOWN.

THE PAPER SAID THAT OTHER PALESTINIAN LEADERS ARE REASSURING ARAFAT TO POSTPONE ANY AMMAN VISIT. ARAFAT IS PREPARING, MEANWHILE, TO HEAD A LARGE PALESTINIAN DELEGATION TO MOSCOW IN MID-APRIL. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

17. SYRIA. ACCORDING TO A SYRIAN SECURITY OFFICIAL, MEMBERS OF THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD IN SYRIA HAVE ADMITTED

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FEBRUARY 22 ASSASSINATION OF THE RECTOR OF DAMASCUS UNIVERSITY, WHO WAS ALSO PROMINENT WITHIN THE ALAWITE COMMUNITY. (THE REGIME HAS PUBLICLY BLAMED IRAQ.) THOSE APPREHENDED CLAIM TO HAVE SWORN VENGEANCE AGAINST LEADING ALAWITES BECAUSE OF THE DEATH OF A MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD LUMINARY AFTER HIS ARREST LAST FALL. REPORTEDLY STILL AT LARGE ARE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE ASSASSINATION GROUP, WHO MAY HAVE PLANS TO STRIKE AT OTHER ALAWITES DURING THE TRADITIONAL FORTIETH-DAY MOURNING SERVICE WHICH WOULD NORMALLY BE HELD SUNDAY. SYRIAN SECURITY FORCES WERE, THEREFORE, PREPARED FOR POSSIBLE VIOLENCE OVER THE WEEKEND.

18. JORDAN'S MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HASSAN IBRAHIM, COMMENTED TO EMBASSY AMMAN THAT EFFORTS TOWARD SYRIAN-JORDANIAN CONFEDERATION ARE AT THE POINT WHERE THE SYRIANS WANT "A GREAT LEAP FORWARD" TO UNITY. JORDAN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WANTS TO CONTINUE THE SUBDUED STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH OF INCREASING AREAS OF FUNCTIONAL COOPERATION. ANY SYRIAN-JORDANIAN SHARED GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION THAT SHOULD EMERGE, IBRAHIM ADDED, SHOULD BE AT MOST CONFEDERAL AND HEADED BY A COUNCIL, NOT A SINGLE PERSON. EMBASSY AMMAN COMMENTED THAT IBRAHIM'S REMARKS LIKELY REFLECT THE OFFICIAL
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JORDANIAN ATTITUDE ON THIS ISSUE AND INDICATE THAT PROGRESS TOWARD RAPPROACHMENT SEEMS TO HAVE SLOWED CONSIDERABLY. (CONFIDENTIAL)
VANCE

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